

OUTDOOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN FOR FOND DU LAC COUNTY

2006-2010



Highway 45 Wayside Boat Launch

Fond du Lac County
Planning & Parks Department
April 2006

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Introduction

This Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan for Fond du Lac County is an update of the plan adopted in 2000. This Plan will serve Fond du Lac County as a guide in recreation and park development and will enable the County to participate in State and Federal recreation grant programs, which require such a plan as a prerequisite.

Since the 2000 plan revision, Fond du Lac County has received \$1,300,000 in State and Federal grant assistance for recreation projects and trails, \$16,700 in conservation aids, and approximately \$427,000 in snowmobile trail maintenance and development funding.

Upon adoption by the Fond du Lac County Board of Supervisors, this revised recreation plan will continue in use as a guide in recreation and park planning and development, and will enable Fond du Lac County to maintain eligibility for Federal and State recreation grants. A capital improvement plan for county parks is also incorporated into this document for 2006-2010.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COUNTY

Geography

Fond du Lac County is located in east central Wisconsin at the southern end of Lake Winnebago. The total land area of the County is 724 square miles or 463,360 acres. The County is divided into 21 civil towns, 9 villages and 3 cities. Refer to Map 1 on the next page.

A total of 97,296 people live in Fond du Lac County, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. The 2005 population estimate prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Administration for Fond du Lac County puts our population at 100,163. About two-thirds of the population lives in the cities and villages; the City of Fond du Lac alone contains over 42,000 people. The other third of the population is scattered throughout the 21 unincorporated towns, with some concentrations along Lake Winnebago and near the City of Fond du Lac in the Towns of Empire, Fond du Lac, Friendship and Taycheedah.

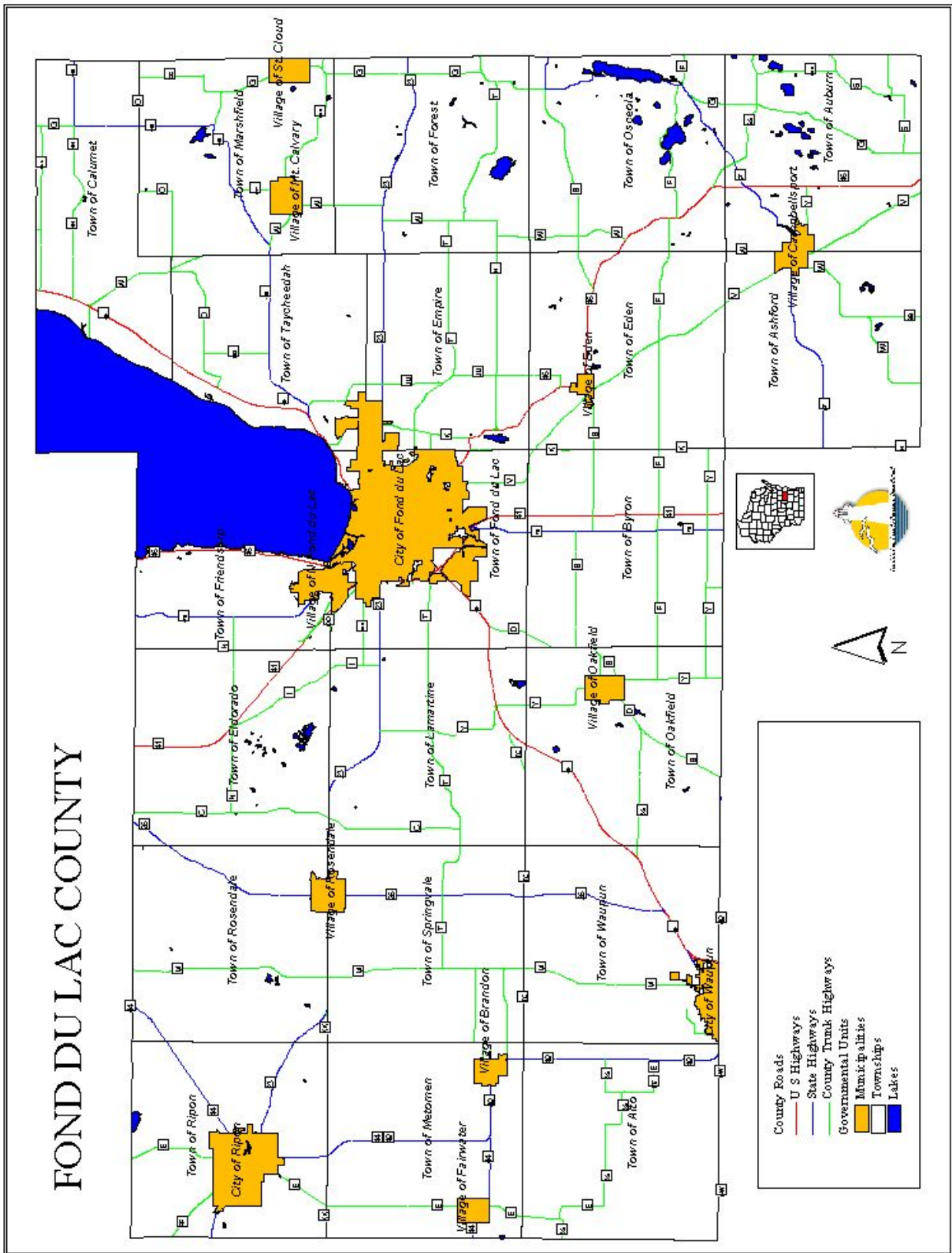
Most growth in population is expected to occur within the cities and villages. The majority of the County is expected to retain much of its rural character, although growth is expected in the Towns of Auburn, Ashford, Empire, Fond du Lac, Friendship and Taycheedah.

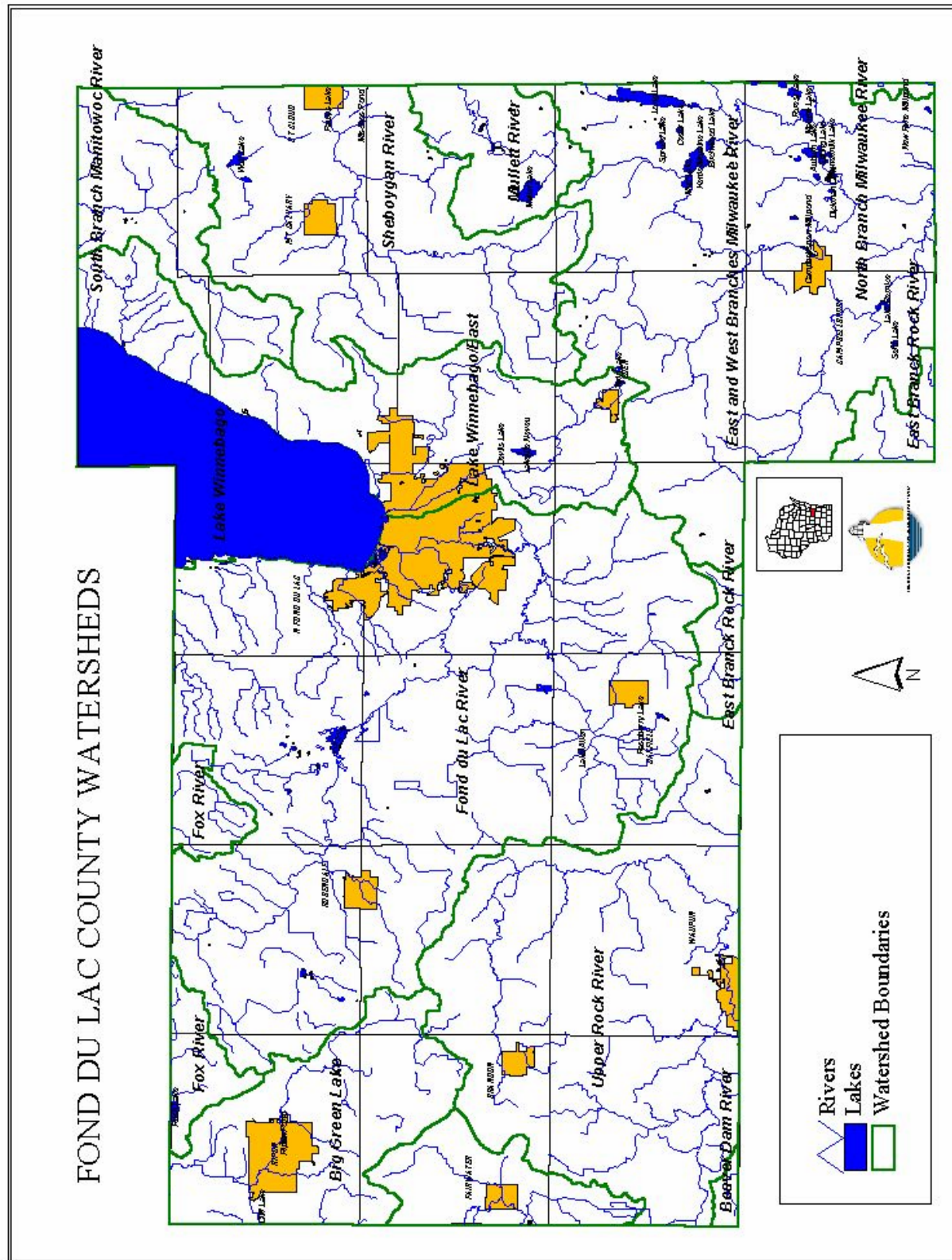
Geology and Topography

There are two main types of bedrock under Fond du Lac County: the older crystalline rock such as granite and the younger sedimentary rocks such as dolomite, sandstone and shale. In some places, this bedrock appears at the surface, as does the dolomite of the Niagara Escarpment and the sandstone and granite at the eastern edge of the County. In most parts of the County, however, the bedrock is covered with unconsolidated overburden consisting of sand, gravel and clay. The Pleistocene Glaciers last seen in Wisconsin about 10,000 years ago left this overburden. This overburden ranges in thickness from several feet to several hundred feet. In some places, this overburden is well sorted; for example, the several hundred feet of clay deposited by the glacial lakes or the sand and gravel found in kames and eskers.

As they advanced and withdrew, the various stages of the glacier left deposits, which in combination with the bedrock formation, form the major topographic feature of the County. Glacial moraines and other deposition features such as drumlins, kames and eskers form the hills and valleys of the eastern half of the County. The Niagara Escarpment forms the high ridge, which runs just east of Lake Winnebago and swings southwest past Oakfield. The low, flat area around Lake Winnebago was the bed of a large glacial lake. The gently rolling topography of the western part of the County is mostly ground moraine, and the ridges and outcrops near Ripon and Fairwater are bedrock controlled. Lake Winnebago and the Horicon Marsh are part of a long broad valley carved by a lobe of the glacier in the relatively soft shale bedrock previously found there.

Map 1 Towns, Villages & Cities, Fond du Lac County





Watersheds

According to the Soil Conservation Service, there are seventeen major watershed areas in Fond du Lac County, draining into ten river systems. Only one major river, the Fond du Lac River, is located completely within the County; the other rivers flow out of the County. The major watersheds are delineated on Map 2, and are listed along with their size in acres in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Major Watersheds of Fond du Lac County

Watershed	Acreage
Milwaukee River, West Branch	20,560
Milwaukee River, Main Branch	53,500
Milwaukee River, East Branch	10,280
Milwaukee River, North Branch	411
Sheboygan River	50,990
Manitowoc River	18,500
Mullet River	12,336
Grand River	13,673
Silver Creek	31,663
Rush Creek	2,755
Fox River	8,779
Fond du Lac River, East Branch	75,700
Fond du Lac River, West Branch	63,593
Upper Rock River	62,002
Rock River, East Branch	9,889
East Shore Lake Winnebago	12,028
West Shore Lake Winnebago	23,233
Total Acreage	469,892

Source: Fond du Lac County Farmland Preservation Plan, 1980

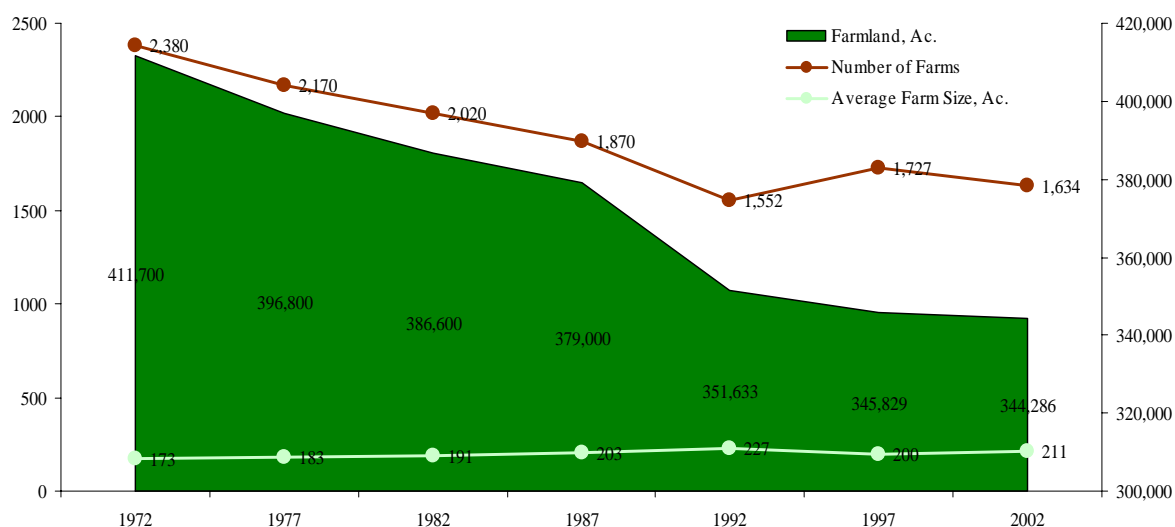
The Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Milwaukee Rivers begin in the eastern part of the County and flow eastward to Lake Michigan. These three rivers and their tributaries drain just over a third of the County. The Fond du Lac River, flowing to Lake Winnebago, drains the central third of the County. The headwaters of the Rock River lie over a sub-continental divide in the southwestern part of the County, and drain southward into the Mississippi River.

Land Use and Agriculture

Agriculture is the major land use in Fond du Lac County. Data from the 1997 Census of Agriculture show that approximately 70 percent of the total land area in the County (about 324,893 out of 463,360) is in farms. This figure is down from 351,893 for about an 8 percent loss of farmland in a five-year period. All “land in farms” is not productive cropland, because wetlands and woodlands that are owned by farmers are included in that acreage, but it is a revealing statistic.

According to the 1974 Census of Agriculture, about 83 percent of the land in Fond du Lac County was in farms. By 1992, land in farms dropped to 76 percent. The number of farms has declined by more than half between 1974 and 1997, from 2,186 farms to 934 farms. Some of these apparent changes are due to differences in classifications between the years, but the decrease of land in farms is also attributable to urbanization, and the decrease in the number of farms is partially explained by the increase in average farm size. The following chart graphs the trends of farm size and the number of farms in Fond du Lac County for the 1974 to 1992 period. Over the 30-year period more than 100 square miles or the equivalent of about 3 townships worth of agricultural land was lost to development.

Figure 1 Trends in Farms and Farmland, 1974-1997, Fond du Lac County



Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA, 2006

Population

The 2000 U.S. Census population count for Fond du Lac County was 97,296. The most current population estimate for the County was 100,163 for January 1, 2005. Decennial growth in population reached a peak in 1970 with a 12.6% increase. County population trends have generally been in line with State trends. Table 2 below illustrates population growth since 1930.

Table 2 Population Growth, 1930-2004 Fond du Lac County

Year	Co. Pop.	% Change	State Pop.	% Change
1930	59,883	--	2,939,006	--
1940	62,353	4.12%	3,137,587	6.76%
1950	67,829	8.78%	3,434,575	9.47%
1960	75,085	10.70%	3,951,777	15.06%
1970	84,567	12.63%	4,417,821	11.79%
1980	88,964	5.20%	4,705,767	6.52%
1990	90,083	1.26%	4,891,769	3.95%
2000	97,296	8.01%	5,254,930	7.42%
2005	100,163	2.95%	5,580,757	6.20%

Source: U.S. Census and WDOA Estimates, 2005

Figure 2 Population by Age Group, 1940-2000, Fond du Lac County

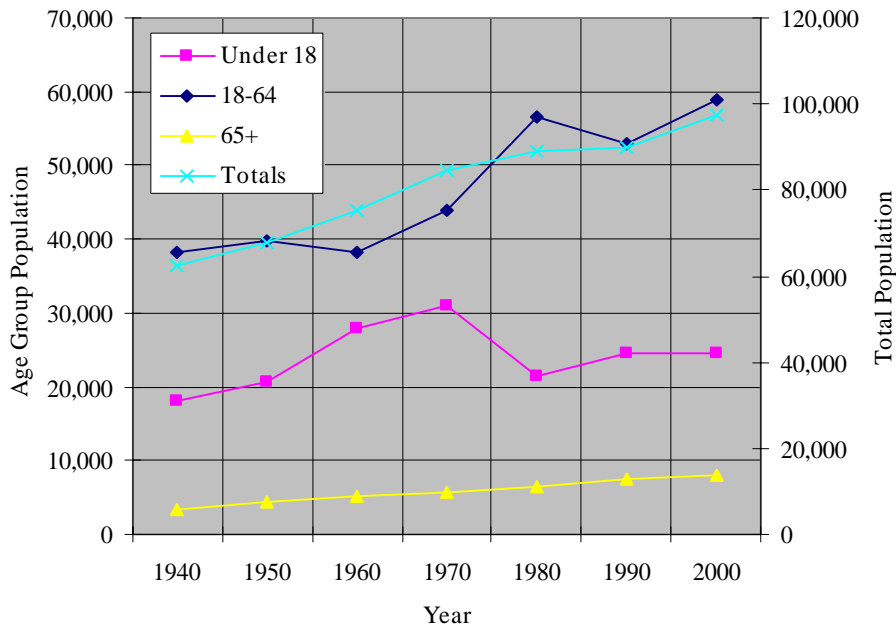


Figure 2 illustrates the age trend of County residents. For outdoor recreation purposes it is often said that the under 18 and over 64 age groups benefit most from outdoor recreation opportunities in any given community. Figure 2 shows a gradual trend toward an aging population and a stable population of under 18 persons. As persons in the 19-64 age group grow older there will likely be an increasing number of persons of retirement age in the county. Outdoor recreation opportunities for retirement age persons may need special consideration as the County plans for and provides parks and open space in the coming decades.

Census figures for 1990 show the County population as 65% urban and 35% rural. Urban is defined as all persons living in residences within incorporated cities and villages and within towns of 2,500 or more inhabitants. The 1990 census shows a large shift away from rural to urban areas within the County. This shift reversed a three-decade trend of rural areas increasing in population at a greater rate than urban areas of the County. However, in 2000, the shift in growth moved back to rural areas of the County and the percentage of persons in urban areas dropped as more people are building homes outside of urbanized areas of Fond du Lac County.

Table 3 Population by Urban & Rural Residence, 1960-2000, Fond du Lac County

Year	Urban Pop.	% Urban	% Change	Rural Pop.	% Rural	% Change	Total Pop.
1960	43,517	57.96%		31,568	42.04%		75,085
1970	48,319	57.14%	11.03%	36,248	42.86%	14.83%	84,567
1980	49,511	55.65%	2.47%	39,453	44.35%	8.84%	88,964
1990	58,397	64.83%	17.95%	31,685	35.17%	-19.69%	90,082
2000	60,225	61.90%	3.13%	37,071	38.10%	17.00%	97,296

Source: Census of Population, No. of Inhabitants, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1980-2000

Table 4 Population Projections by Urban/Rural

Unit of Government	1970 Census	1980 Census	1990 Census	2000RPC	2010 RPC	2020 RPC
All Cities & Villages	54,495	55,817	58,404	64,465	68,586	72,509
All Towns	30,072	33,147	31,679	32,968	34,799	36,358
Fond du Lac Co.	84,567	88,964	90,083	97,433	103,385	108,867
Per cent Urban	64.4%	62.7%	64.8%	66.2%	66.3%	66.6%

Source: U.S. Census & East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, 2004.

Table 4 shows population projections for incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County, roughly corresponding to growth in urban and rural areas within the County. The ECWRPC projection shows an increasing urban trend in the County. This trend has long-term implications for parkland and facilities for the County, cities and villages in the County, and for those towns with increasing populations and population densities.

AVAILABLE NATURAL RESOURCES

Existing natural resources within Fond du Lac County provide a variety of recreational opportunities. These resources include lakes, streams, wetlands, woodlands and some rolling hills and escarpments. Much of the County is agricultural land, which provides open space and some wildlife habitat but little recreational opportunity to non-landowners.

Lakes

There are 48 lakes in Fond du Lac County, most of which have public access. Lake Winnebago is by far the largest of these lakes, and provides outstanding opportunities for fishing and water sports. Public access to Lake Winnebago is adequate, but not well developed outside of the City of Fond du Lac.

Other lakes include Rush, Long, Kettle Moraine, Wolf, and Mauthe. All have public access and are well used for recreational purposes. Of the major lakes in the County, only Lake DeNevue and Mullet Lake are not readily accessible to the public.

Streams

There are about 50 streams and rivers within Fond du Lac County, but most are small, slow and shallow. The longest sections of stream are the Milwaukee River, the Rock River and the Fond du Lac River.

Fishing is poor in most of the local streams, although some trout do exist at the headwaters of the East Branch of the Milwaukee River in the Kettle Moraine area, and in Parsons Creek before its confluence with the East Branch of the Fond du Lac River.

Wetlands

Wetlands, many of them associated with streams and lakes, are a valuable recreational and environmental resource in Fond du Lac County. Several large wetland areas, described in the next section, are publicly owned and are easily accessible. Most of the smaller wetland areas are located on private land and are not open to the public. Both large and small wetland areas do however, continue to function as assets to the environment in that they provide wildlife and waterfowl habitat, fish spawning areas, and help maintain surface water quality by filtering runoff.

Woodlands

Woodlands once covered between 40 and 80 percent of Fond du Lac County, and now make up between 10 and 30 percent of the land cover. Areas where woodlands still exist are areas of public ownership such as the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, or areas that have physical characteristics that make them poor farmland. Areas of high bedrock, some wet soils, steep slopes and similar terrain that did not make good farmland have been left in trees and now comprise a valuable asset to the environment.

Woodlands, even small ones on farms, are a valuable resource in this highly agricultural county. They provide wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion, help to cleanse the air, and provide recreational opportunities. Both the State and the County provide recreational facilities that are wooded and easily accessible to the public.

Hills, Escarpments

Much of the terrain of Fond du Lac County, particularly the central and western parts, is nearly flat to gently rolling. Only in the eastern part of Fond du Lac County, with its drumlin fields and the Niagara Escarpment, and in the Ripon area, are hills available for such winter sports as sledding and skiing. The only public sledding hills in Fond du Lac are man-made and are located at Buttermilk Park, the UW Fond du Lac Campus and Adelaide Park. No public downhill ski areas exist in the entire county.

The Niagara Escarpment, which curves through Fond du Lac County for about fifteen miles, is the most significant relief found in Fond du Lac County. Only two small parts of it however, are publicly owned. The Oakfield Ledge State Natural Area and the Town of Taycheedah's Kiekhaefer Park are the only public lands that offer recreational opportunities on the Escarpment.

STATE RECREATION AREAS

Some of the most significant recreational resources available in Fond du Lac County are owned by the State of Wisconsin and operated by the Department of Natural Resources. Although not under the purview of the County Recreation Plan, these resources must be taken into account.

Kettle Moraine State Forest

Kettle Moraine State Forest, located in the southeastern part of Fond du Lac County, is a 10,582-acre portion of the 27,725-acre northern unit of Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Made up of geological formations caused by retreating glaciers, the forest is managed for forestry and outdoor recreation. Textbook examples of glacial landforms are scattered throughout the forest, such as drumlins, kames, eskers and kettles. Botanically, the forest is quite diversified with nearly sixty species of trees present, together with numerous shrubs, wild flowers, ferns and other plant life. There are nearly 40 mammal species ranging from the white-tailed deer to the small mammals. Birds are seen everywhere, especially during the spring and fall migrations. Some of the higher ridges and eskers provide excellent viewing areas.

The major recreational developments within the forest are located at Mauthe Lake south of New Prospect, and at Long Lake north of Dundee. Both have excellent camping and hiking facilities. Mauthe Lake offers electricity, trailer sites, tent camping, fireplaces, picnic tables, sanitary facilities and drinking water, while Long Lake offers all of the above except electricity. Hiking trails and cross-country ski trails are available in several parts of the Kettle Moraine.

Horicon National Wildlife Refuge

Horicon Marsh lies in northern Dodge and southern Fond du Lac Counties, at the junction of the east and west branches of the Rock River.

The Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (north 1/3 of marsh) is managed by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Horicon Marsh Wildlife Area (south 2/3 of marsh) is managed by Wisconsin DNR. Often referred to as the “Everglades of the North”, the 31,000-acre marsh is one of the best known wetlands in the Midwest.

The marsh provides habitat for up to three hundred fifty varieties of birds including herons, egrets, and numerous songbirds. Deer and other small game animals are numerous. In the fall, hundreds of thousands of geese stop at the marsh while migrating south from Canada. Because of the geese, the marsh has become a major tourist attraction. Goose and duck hunters also frequent the area.

Eldorado Marsh

Eldorado Marsh is located five miles west of the City of Fond du Lac, and consists of over 6,000 acres of State-owned land. A trail runs through the center of the marsh, permitting the visitor to observe wildlife at close range. Deer, waterfowl, raccoons, muskrats, rabbits, songbirds and other wildlife are common. This marsh is heavily used by sportsmen hunting deer, geese, ducks and pheasant, and is also used for hiking and bird-watching.

Other State Land

Several other State recreation areas also exist in Fond du Lac County, including parts of the Mullet Creek Wildlife Area and the Brandon Marsh. These areas are managed by DNR staff to provide waterfowl and wildlife habitat, and provide sportsmen with public hunting land. Also, the Oakfield Ledge Natural Area provides a study area along the Niagara Escarpment. The Glacial Habitat Restoration Area covers the western nine townships of Fond du Lac County. The goal of this DNR program is to provide a variety of habitats for upland birds and wetland waterfowl, eventually including as many as 4,082 acres in these nine townships. Most of this land is open to public hunting and passive recreation.

Ice Age Reserve

Kettle Moraine State Forest is actually a unit of the Ice Age Reserve. The Reserve is also part of the Statewide Ice Age Trail System, which connects geologic points of interest created or exposed by glacial action. The Federal Ice Age Interpretive Center, located just south of Dundee in the Town of Osceola, contains educational displays regarding glacial action and landforms.

MUNICIPAL RECREATION FACILITIES

As part of the inventory of available recreational facilities in Fond du Lac County, it is important to consider the many facilities provided by the individual municipalities. These municipalities provide most of the parks in Fond du Lac County, and the municipal parks fill an important role in the provision of active recreation areas such as baseball diamonds, tennis and basketball

courts, swimming pools, and playgrounds. School facilities also provide important recreational opportunities.

Table 5 provides an inventory of available municipal facilities, including school facilities where possible. County recreational facilities are not included in this table. As this table illustrates, there are 126 public parks or playgrounds available throughout Fond du Lac County (not counting State and county parks), with a total of about 1,920 acres of land.

Table 5 Municipal Recreational Facilities (non-county)*

	Municipality	Number	Acreage	Facilities Available
Cities	Fond du Lac	45	1,020	Full range of facilities
	Ripon	15	106	Full range of facilities
	Waupun	15	60	Full range of facilities
	Total	75	1,186	
Villages	Brandon	3	46	Standard
	Campbellsport	7	117	Standard
	Eden	4	28	Standard
	Fairwater	2	9	Baseball & playground
	Mt. Calvary	3	10	Standard
	North Fond du Lac	5	36	Standard & pool
	Oakfield	4	72	Standard
	Rosendale	5	49	Standard
	St. Cloud	3	12	Standard
	Total	36	379	
Towns	Alto	1	1	Basketball, playground
	Ashford	1	32	Basketball, playground
	Auburn	1	51	Basketball, playground
	Byron	0	0	
	Calumet	2	10	Lake access, ball diamonds, shelter
	Eden	1	57	Basketball, playground
	Eldorado	1	2	Baseball
	Empire	0	0	
	Fond du Lac	1	35	Open space, river access
	Forest	1	6	Baseball
	Friendship	0	0	
	Lamartine	1	4	
	Marshfield	0	0	
	Metomen	0	0	
	Oakfield	0	0	
	Osceola	1	2	Baseball
	Ripon	0	0	
	Rosendale	0	0	
	Springvale	0	0	
	Taycheedah	4	155	Boat landing, open space, ball diamonds
	Waupun	0	0	
	Total	15	355	
	Cities	75	1,186	
	Villages	36	379	
	Towns	15	355	
	Grand Total	126	1,920	

*Includes public and private school facilities and fireman's parks.

"Standard" under the Facilities Available column above includes facilities like baseball, tennis, basketball, playgrounds and picnic areas.

COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Along with the State, local and school district recreational facilities available to the public, there are a number of County-owned and operated facilities. Fond du Lac County operates a public golf course; fairgrounds, ten county parks, four recreational trails and a snowmobile trail system. All have benefited from considerable improvements during the 1980's and 1990's. These facilities are outlined in Table 6 and described in more detail below. Locations are shown on Map 3.

Fairgrounds

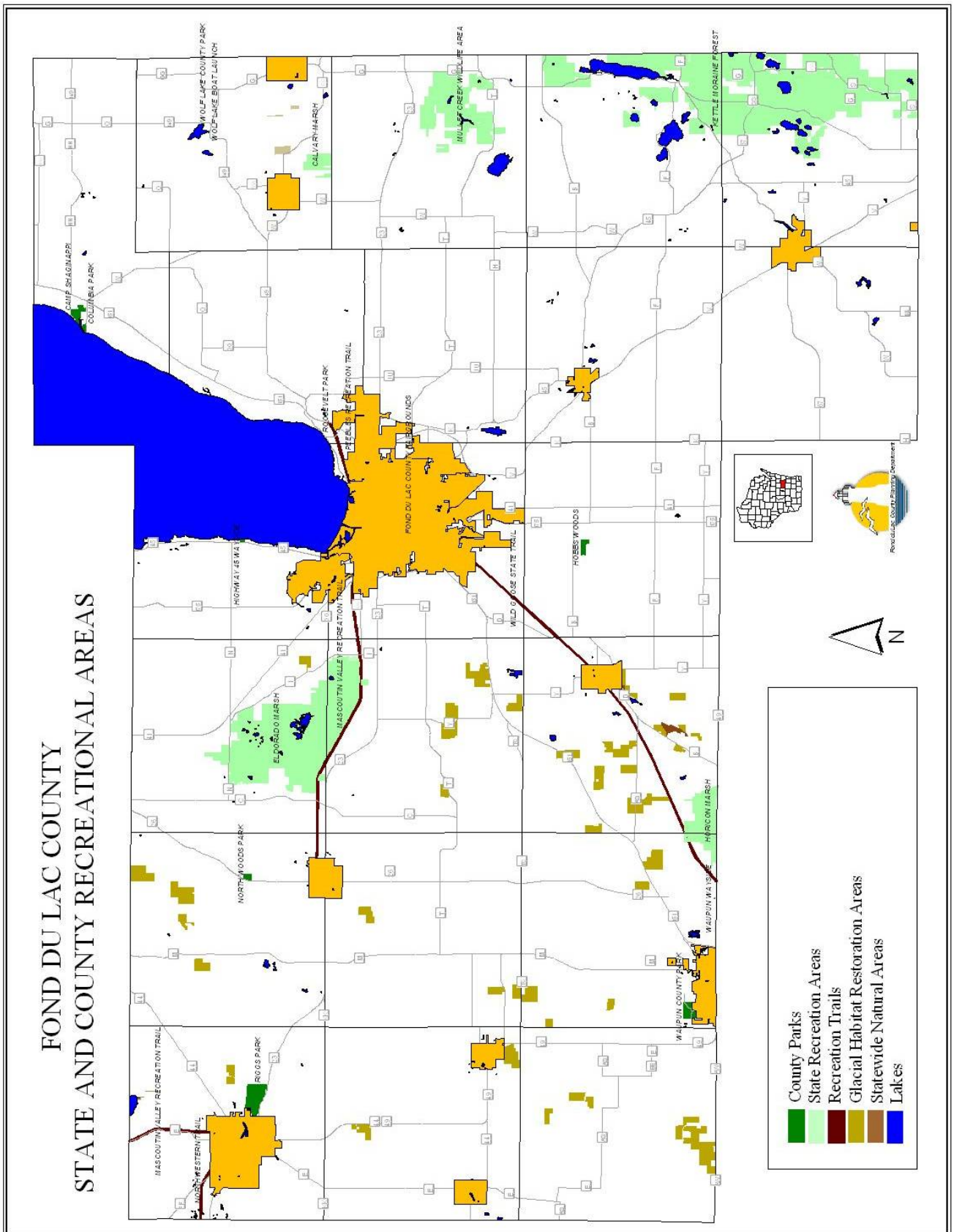
The County Fairgrounds is approximately 90 acres in size and is located in the City of Fond du Lac. Although it is perhaps best known as the site of the annual county fair, the fairgrounds have become a multiple-use recreational facility that is utilized on a year-round basis.

Seven major buildings are available for use at the fairgrounds, with over 66,000 sq. ft. of heated exhibition space available. The Exposition Building is the centerpiece of the fairgrounds, and the Exhibition Building and the Recreation Center are also heavily utilized. Four large barns of varying sizes are also available. A 50,000 square foot ice facility with 2 sheets of ice is available to the public on a limited basis. The project was a joint effort between Blue Line, the City of Fond du Lac and the County.

Aside from the County Fair fair, the fairgrounds are used year-round for trade shows, auto shows, major company and church picnics, dances, horse shows, dog shows, equipment exhibitions, an ethnic festival and art fair, craft shows and rummage sales, and other events of almost every description.

The fairgrounds are also the site of a municipal water park operated by the City of Fond du Lac. A park is located adjacent to the water park at the north end of the fairgrounds, and includes playground and picnic equipment, and two picnic shelters. A ball diamond, grandstand, horse arena and horseshoe courts are located at the south end of the fairgrounds.

Map 3 County and State Recreational Areas



Rolling Meadows Golf Course

Located at the southwestern edge of the City of Fond du Lac, Rolling Meadows is a 27-hole championship golf course. The course was constructed in the early 70's, and has been improved each year since. Designed to accommodate about 40,000 rounds of golf each season, the course handled 47,000 rounds in 1988 that unfortunately, led to turning away potential users and golf leagues.

Although originally constructed county tax dollars, Rolling Meadows has operated without public subsidy since 1981. Revenues available above annual costs have been put to use for improving the golf course and its equipment. Past improvements included several new tees, a new irrigation control system, new sand traps, clubhouse improvements, rehabilitation of the high-capacity irrigation well, a continuous upgrading of maintenance equipment and most recently a 9-hole addition, for a total of 27 holes. In 2005, the course handled 70,000 rounds.

Waupun County Park

Waupun County Park is the second largest county park at 103 acres. It is located one mile northwest of the City of Waupun, along County Highway MMM.

The park contains a wooded 42 unit public campground, with electrical hookups, restrooms, and showers. The large public swimming pool, open June through August, attracts approximately 30,000 user-visits per year. Other facilities include playground equipment, three open-air picnic shelters, one enclosed shelter, and a baseball field.

The northeastern 40 acres of the park is a State Scientific Area, with hiking and skiing trails. It is an excellent example of a southern mesic hardwood forest, with red and white oak, maple, and white ash.

The park caretakers live in the County-owned house at the center of the Park and watch over the campgrounds, picnic shelters and restrooms, rent out campsites.

Past improvements at Waupun County Park include a major rehabilitation of pool equipment and the pool tank, a pool equipment building, a remodeled bathhouse, an expanded and re-paved parking lot, lighting in part of the park, a new playground, a new pit toilet, a new pedestrian/snowmobile bridge over the South Branch of the Rock River, and a new picnic shelter. In 2005, half of the campground was rebuilt on higher ground to eliminate periodic flooding of the campground.

Columbia Park

Columbia Park is a 19-acre county park located on Lake Winnebago about ten miles northeast of Fond du Lac. The park contains a modern 40-unit campground with electrical hookups and restrooms, boat and RV sanitary dump stations, a playground, a basketball court, one enclosed and one open-air picnic shelter, and picnic facilities.

Columbia Park is probably best known for its boating facilities. A 4-slip marina is available for annual rentals, along with overnight docking for another 40-50 boats on 900 feet of harbor wall. Six boat launches and parking for 100 cars and trailers are available. A 70-foot observation tower and navigation beacon marks the harbor entrance.

Columbia Park is watched over by part-time campground hosts. The campground hosts take reservations for campsites, boat slips, and docking space.

Past improvements at Columbia Park include the campground, a drainage system, boat launches, renovation of the harbor wall, two expanded and repaved parking lots, a pit toilet, a renovated bathroom with showers, connection to sanitary sewer, the construction of a shelter, a playground, landscaping and extensive boat facility improvements including an overflow boater's parking lot, 400 feet of additional transient and overnight dock space, dredging of the main harbor channel and a sanitary dump station for boaters and another for RVs.

Riggs County Park

This park is the most recent addition to the County park system. At 300 acres, Riggs County Park is the County's largest park. Purchase in 1998, the park is planned as a largely natural area park with 180 acres of wetlands, 70 acres of native prairie restoration and about 50 acres of active recreation areas including trails, picnic areas, a shelter, sledding hill, bathhouse and man-made swimming lake. A master plan prepared for the park in 1998-1999 is guiding development of the property.

Shaginappi Natural Area Park

Acquired in 1997, this park is the site of a former Boy Scout camp. The park is a natural area of 100 acres of wetlands, lakeshore, woods and prairie. Situated adjacent to Columbia Park, the park shares Calumet Harbor. Pipe Creek winds through the park property. Hiking and skiing trails, a snowmobile trail and the restored lodge are the primary attractions to the park. Due to extensive archeological findings on the site, the park has potential for historical interpretation and a museum.

Wolf Lake County Park

This four-acre park is located in the northeastern part of Fond du Lac County, about two miles northeast of the Village of Mt. Calvary, along Highway 149. The park is located on Wolf Lake, and includes a boat launch with parking, a sand beach with a designated swimming area, a picnic shelter and picnic facilities, playground equipment, and a pit toilet.

The sand beach at Wolf Lake County Park was reconstructed in the 1990s, some new playground equipment was installed, and the boat launch and fishing pier were reconstructed in the late 1980s.

Roosevelt County Park

Roosevelt Park is a three-acre park on the southeast shore of Lake Winnebago along Winnebago Drive. The long, narrow, park offers about 900 feet of Lake Winnebago shoreline. Facilities at the park include parking, toilets, and picnic tables and grills.

The park is a popular spot during the summer months for sunning, and for unsupervised swimming and wading in Lake Winnebago. Boaters often anchor offshore and wade to the park for picnics. Windsurfing has become a popular activity off the park, because of its location on the windward shore.

Some filling, grading and seeding has been done in recent years to correct drainage problems and expand the useable area of the park. ADA accessibility was addressed in 1994. A lighting system was installed in the park in the early 1990s.

Hobb's Woods Nature Area

Located about three miles south of Fond du Lac, Hobbs Woods is a 60-acre county park devoted to hiking and nature study. Most of the park is thickly wooded, but several acres of prairie, planted in 1979-80, are coming along well. Parsons Creek carves a large ravine through the park, and harbors some naturally reproducing brook trout. About three miles of nature trails, which are keyed to a self-guiding brochure, wind through the park.

The park is quite popular for hiking in the spring, summer and fall and for cross-country skiing during the winter. Recent improvements at Hobbs Woods include an enlargement of the parking lot, and a great deal of work by the former Wisconsin Conservation Corps and parks crews to enhance trout habitat and reduce stream bank erosion in Parsons Creek. Other work has included removal of deadfalls or dead trees, which threaten to fall on trails or restrict the flow of the creek.

Highway 45 Wayside Park

Highway 45 Wayside Park is approximately eight acres in size, and is located on the west shore of Lake Winnebago about three miles north of Fond du Lac. Facilities at the park include parking, toilets, and a picnic shelter, grills and tables and a 4-lane launch and breakwater built in 2005 that provides a harbor of refuge.

Northwoods Park

Northwoods Park is a largely undeveloped 35-acre woods located on Highway 26 about two miles north of Rosendale. Some hiking trails have been cut in the woods, and a small, gravel parking lot is available.

Veterans Park

Veterans Park is located on Main Street at the corner of Western Avenue in downtown Fond du Lac, on the site of the former county courthouse. The one-acre park is dedicated in honor of all Fond du Lac County Veterans.

The beautifully landscaped park is a popular spot for walking, lunches and admiring the landscaping, or for quiet contemplation. It has become the focal point of Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, of the annual holiday parade and tree lighting, and of several other annual functions.

Table 6 County Recreation Facilities

Facility	Mi.	Ac.	Camping	Restrooms	Showers	Sanitary Dump Station	Picnic Tables	Shelters	Hall	Boat Launch	Swimming	Playground	Hiking	Bicycling	Snowmobiling	Equestrian	X-C Skiing
Columbia Park	10	19	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x					
Eisenbahn Trail		109															
Fairgrounds(10)		90	x	x		x	x	x									
Highway 45 Wayside		8		x			x	x									
Hobbs Woods	22	60											x				x
Mascoutin Valley Trail		176											x	x	x	x	x
Northwestern Trail(10)		2	20				x						x	x	x		x
Northwoods Park		35											x				x
Peebles Trail	5	22											x	x			x
Prairie Trail	7	17											x	x			
Riggs County Park	243	300											x				x
Rolling Meadows G. C.(0)		235							x								
Roosevelt Park		3		x			x				x						
Shaginappi Park		100		x					x		x		x	x	x		x
Snowmobile Trails	13														x		
Veteran's Park		1															
Waupun Park		103	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x		x
Wild Goose Trail		191					x						x	x	x		x
Wolf Lake Park		4					x	x		x	x	x					
Total Mi./Ac.	302	1,493															

Source: Fond du Lac County Planning Department, 2006.

COUNTY RECREATION TRAILS

Fond du Lac County planned and developed its first recreation trail in the 1980s. Known then as the Tri-County Trail, this trail was a cooperative effort between Green Lake, Winnebago and Fond du Lac Counties. More recently, the County and neighboring counties along with the DNR established the former Tri-County Trail as the Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail between Fond du Lac and Berlin.

In 1988, in a cooperative agreement with the DNR and Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties, the three parties planned, developed and now maintain the Wild Goose State Park Trail between Fond du Lac and Clyman Junction, some 34 miles long. This multiple use trail was the first of its kind, a State/counties effort. A cooperative agreement with the State gave them purchasing responsibility of the abandoned railroad grade for the location of the trail. The agreement gave the two counties the responsibility to develop and maintain the trail in accordance with State park trail standards.

The Fox Valley Western Railroad between Eden and West Bend was recently acquired by the State. Fond du Lac and Washington Counties partnered with the State to create the Eisenbahn State Park Trail. The Eisenbahn Trail is now being developed as a multiple use recreation trail similar to the Wild Goose and Mascoutin Valley trails.

The County in recent years has established a number of other local trails on former railroad right-of-ways and along highways. The overall goal of the County's trail program has been to interconnect trails and parks in the County.

County Snowmobile Trail System

Fond du Lac County's snowmobile trail system consists of approximately 243 miles of groomed snowmobile trails on privately owned land. Another 45 miles of State funded trails are located on State and County owned lands. Funded almost completely by the Wisconsin DNR through annual grants, the trails are groomed and maintained for the most part by local snowmobile clubs. The system includes three trails owned/operated by the DNR/Fond du Lac County, which are described later.

The County's role in most of the system consists of applying for and administering annual DNR snowmobile grants, ensuring compliance with State regulations and guidelines, and planning improvements. Recent improvements have included the addition of 32 miles of trail, including the Mascoutin Valley Trail and the Eisenbahn Trail.

Eisenbahn State Park Trail

This trail is being constructed on the abandoned Fox Valley Railroad right of way between Eden and West Bend. Construction is anticipated to be completed in 2006. The Eisenbahn Trail is a multiple purpose trail similar in construction and uses to the Wild Goose Trail. The Trail connects parks in Eden, Campbellsport, Kewaskum and West Bend. A future trail connection may be made by the WDNR to the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Northwestern Trail

The Northwestern Trail is a short segment of railroad right-of-way located between the City of Ripon and the west county line. It is about two and one-half miles in length. The trail is part of the County snowmobile trail system. It is used for hiking, cycling and running. The rural section is used for snowmobiling. Fond du Lac County and the city signed a 25-year lease with WP & L in 1994 this trail.

Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail

The Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail is a 32-mile State park trail, twenty-two miles of which are located in Fond du Lac County. The trail is surfaced between Berlin and Ripon with limestone screenings, similar to the Wild Goose Trail. The trail is used for hiking, cycling, running and snowmobiling. The Ripon to Rosendale section of the trail is in private ownership, making trail improvements uncertain. The Rosendale to Fond du Lac section of the trail passes through the DNR owned Eldorado Marsh.

Peebles Trail

The Peebles Trail is a 5.6-mile segment of abandoned railroad right-of-way and active road right-of-way between Fond du Lac and St. Peter. The trail was acquired from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in 1994 and development is set for completion in 2006. The trail will be utilized for walking, running and bicycling, connecting Fond du Lac and St. Peter.

Prairie Trail

The Prairie Trail is a 7 mile pedestrian/bicycling path along the Highway 151 Fond du Lac Bypass between Martin Road and Winnebago Drive. The trail was designed and built in conjunction with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and with financial assistance from WisDOT, the WDNR, City of Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County and the Morning Rotary Club of Fond du Lac. The asphalt paved trail part of a connecting system of trails to link the Wild Goose Trail, the Peebles Trail and the future Plank Trail that is anticipated to be build between Fond du Lac and Greenbush in Sheboygan County.

Wild Goose State Park Trail

The Wild Goose State Park Trail is maintained and operated by Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties. The trail right-of-way is owned by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Thirteen miles of the 34-mile trail are located in Fond du Lac County. The trail is constructed on a former railroad right-of-way. The trail is surfaced with compacted limestone screenings. A trailhead parking lot was recently built at the northern terminus of the trail.

The all-season recreational trail has quickly become a popular trail for bicycle riding and hiking in spring, summer and fall, and snowmobiling in the winter.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan for Fond du Lac County was originally written in 1979 and updated each five years through 2000. The Plan served Fond du Lac County as a guide in recreation and park planning and development, and enabled the County to participate in State and Federal recreation grant programs. This updated Plan will continue to serve both functions.

In 2000 the Fond du Lac County Planning and Parks Department completed a thorough rewriting of the Plan. New in the 2000 Plan was the use of a public opinion survey prepared by the Department and mailed to county residents. A randomly generated mailing list of 400 property owner names was created using the combined tax rolls of all cities, villages and towns in the County. A response rate of 39% was achieved, with 156 surveys completed and returned. Survey respondents were asked to read and respond to 27 multiple-part questions related to frequency of park and trail use, satisfaction with county park facilities and perceived needs for park land and park facilities. Portions of the tabulated results from this opinion survey are found throughout this Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan for Fond du Lac County. The survey and complete results are found in the appendix.

Draft copies of the 2006 Plan were sent out for review to interested County Board Supervisors and county staff, all thirty-three municipalities in the County, DNR staff, local sportsmen's groups, conservation clubs and other interested parties. Comments and suggestions were solicited from these people and were incorporated into the final draft, which was sent to the County Board for adoption after a public hearing held by the Parks and Development Committee of the County Board.

A list of the individuals and organizations that received a draft of this Plan follows below:

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following statements of goals and objectives were taken, with some modifications, from the original Fond du Lac County Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan, adopted in 1979.

Goal 1

Establish and maintain a countywide system of parks and trails that will meet the needs of Fond du Lac County residents.

Objectives:

1. Continue to cooperate with and assist municipalities and other organizations in recreation planning and development.
2. Provide facilities with a variety of available activities that accommodate the special needs of the elderly and disabled.
3. Acquire and develop park sites and facilities based on recommended standards, community needs, and the existing distribution of parks and other recreational facilities.
4. Provide recreational facilities that fill unmet recreational needs and preserve threatened natural resources and features.

5. Establish a system of interconnecting trails for recreation and alternate transportation that link to each other and to existing parks and public open spaces throughout the County.

Goal 2

Establish and maintain a system of parks and recreational facilities that help to conserve the natural resources and environment of Fond du Lac County, and make them available for recreational use.

Objectives:

1. Consider environmental impacts in locating and developing all types of recreational facilities.
2. Provide buildings and intensive or active recreation uses only in those areas of least environmental sensitivity. Do not provide these facilities in sensitive areas.
3. Acquire, or assist other agencies to acquire and protect properties that are environmentally sensitive or unique.

Goal 3

Operate and improve the County Parks System, and other county recreational facilities, in an efficient and organized manner.

Objectives:

1. Utilize the recreation plan and the parks capital improvements plan in facility planning and development.
2. Utilize county, State, Federal and private resources to develop and maintain high quality facilities.
3. Utilize, to the fullest extent possible, the skills and energy of county staff and officials in facility planning, development, and operation.

Goal 4

To promote Fond du Lac County parks, open spaces and recreation trails to gain maximum utilization and appreciation of these facilities.

Objectives:

1. Promote county parks, open spaces and recreation trails through other county departments, the Fond du Lac Area Convention & Visitor's Bureau and the State of Wisconsin.
2. Prepare and distribute promotional materials with the locations and descriptions of county parks, open spaces and trails.

3. Work in cooperation with the Fond du Lac School District's Children and Weight Coalition to promote a greater awareness of outdoor recreation opportunities in Fond du Lac County and encourage children and their parents to take advantage of healthy outdoor recreation opportunities in the County.

RECREATION DEMAND AND NEEDS

Recreational demand and needs can be calculated utilizing the system of recreation standards developed by the National Recreational and Park Association (NRPA). The NRPA has developed standards to be used as a guide in determining present and future demand for both total park acreage and for facility type. In other words, the standards can be used to help determine whether enough total recreational *acreage* is available for the needs of the citizens of Fond du Lac County, and also to determine whether the proper *facilities* are available in sufficient quantities.

Utilizing the NRPA acreage standards, based on the population of Fond du Lac County and on population projections, Table 7 provides acreage standards for the present and the near-term future within the County. We can see in Table 7 that there is no unmet *acreage* needs for recreational purposes in the year 2000 and beyond. This assumes that population projections for the County are accurate. Several recent purchases, most notably Shaginappi Park and Riggs County Park, filled the acreage need documented in the 1995 recreation plan.

Table 7 Present/Projected Recreational Demand and Needs (acres)

Year	Population	Low End Demand	High End Demand	Existing Acres	Low End	High End Need*
1980	88,964	1,334	1,779	1,299	-35	-480
1985	90,012	1,350	1,800	1,299	-51	-501
1990	91,000	1,365	1,820	1,520	155	-300
1995	96,432	1,446	1,929	1,671	225	-258
2000	98,018	1,470	1,960	2,129	659	169
2010	103,385	1,550	2,066	2,129	579	63
2020	108,867	1,633	2,177	2,129	496	-48

*Unmet Need (acres) calculated from top of demand range.

Sources: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Population Projections, Estimates, 1999. NRPA standards abstracted from draft DNR Guidelines for Development of Local Outdoor Recreation Plans.

Notes: Demand calculated based on NRPA standard of approximately 15-20 acres recreational space demand per 1000 population. Excludes State and Federal regional parks, etc.

Existing acreage includes county, municipal, and school district recreational facilities, but does not include Rolling Meadows Golf Course, the Fairgrounds outside the park, Kiekhaefer Park, or Supples Marsh, which are unique facilities outside the standards.

It is also interesting to apply the NRPA *facility* standards for selected facilities to Fond du Lac County. This is illustrated in Table 8. See Appendix for NRPA facility standards.

Table 8 Present/Projected Recreational Demand and Needs (selected facilities)

Facility	Year	Population	Demand	Existing	Unmet Need
Baseball/softball	1990	91,000	18	47	none
	2000	98,018	20	47	none
	2010	103,385	20	47	none
	2020	108,867	20	47	none
9-Hole Golf Course	1990	91,000	4	2	2
	2000	98,018	4	3	1
	2010	103,385	4	3	1
	2020	108,867	4	3	1
18-Hole Golf Course	1990	91,000	2	1	1
	2000	98,018	2	2	none
	2010	103,385	2	2	none
	2020	108,867	2	2	none
Swimming Pools	1990	91,000	5	5	none
	2000	98,018	5	5	none
	2010	103,385	5	6	none
	2020	108,867	5	6	none
Indoor Ice Hockey	1990	91,000	1	1	none
	2000	98,018	1	1	none
	2010	103,385	1	2	none
	2020	108,867	1	2	none

Sources: Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Population Projections, Estimates, 1999

NRPA standards abstracted from draft DNR Guidelines for Development of Local Outdoor Recreation Plans.

Table 8 shows us that, according to NRPA standards, there are enough of all the selected facilities for a county of our population, with the exception of 9-hole golf. Geographic distribution is not addressed in the table, but the facility standards as a whole are well met in Fond du Lac County, but geographic distribution of specific facilities is a problem for some rural residents. Also, standards are not qualified for a number of outdoor recreation activities, and popularity of various activities differs substantially from region to region.

Based on statewide surveys and needs assessment, the 1991 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) also prioritized recreation needs for regions of Wisconsin. The SCORP priorities for the DNR Horicon Region (Columbia, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Green Lake and Marquette Counties) are contained in Table 9.

Table 9 SCORP Facility Needs, Horicon Area

High Priority

Fairs, Festivals, Amusement Parks	Historic Sites
Boating	Hiking, Walking/Running/Jogging
Play Equipment	Trails
Fishing	Non-Specific Outdoor Enjoyment

Medium Priority

Outdoor Concerts & Theater	Pleasure Driving & Boat & Bus Tours
Campgrounds	Baseball & Softball
Picnicking	Golf
Hiking/Backpacking	Swimming Pools & Beach Areas
Ice Skating/Hockey Rinks	Tennis Courts
Horseback Riding	Zoos
Spectator Sports	Bicycling
Downhill Skiing	

Low Priorities

Canoeing, Other Water Activities	Nature Activities
Other Trail Uses	

Source: SCORP, 1991; Need Assessment by Area

The SCORP assessment above, done in 1991, may underestimate the demand for ATV and motorcycle facilities and trails, and for golf courses. Based on public discussion in Fond du Lac County, and on the growing popularity of these activities, a need may exist in the area for these facilities.

Based on Tables 7 and 8, there is no need in Fond du Lac County for additional park acres of outdoor recreation space in the next ten years. However, geographic distribution and to some extent terrain and landform types are also factors in parkland need. Future acquisitions in Fond du Lac County should be made with an eye toward filling geographical gaps, especially near population centers of the County and where recreation trails may be located on abandoned railroad right-of-ways (see Map 8).

The first draft of the Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2000-2005, Draft 1.0 contains new and useful information regarding rates of participation in outdoor recreation activities on a statewide basis. For comparison purposes, the report divides the Estimated Participation Rates and Number of Participants for 61 Outdoor Recreation Activities in the 1990s by rank into three categories. Activities are ranked as Highly Popular with a participation rate of roughly a quarter or more of the State's population, Moderately Popular with participation rates of about 10% to 25% and Marginally Popular with participation rates with less than 10%.

Outdoor recreation activities that can be enjoyed at county parks and trails are taken from the SCORP 2000-2005 and formed into the following Table 10.

Table 10 Estimated Participation Rates for 61 Outdoor Activities in the 1990s

Rank	Activity	Participation Rate	Estimated Participants	
1	Outdoor Fairs & Festival	59%	3,066,571	
2	Exercise Walking	38%	1,974,575	
4	Fishing	34%	1,771,214	
5	Wildlife Viewing	34%	1,757,690	
6	Swimming	34%	1,748,697	
8	Bicycling	31%	1,596,805	
9	Bird Watching	29%	1,509,546	
11	Tent Camping	27%	1,392,387	
12	Picnicking	27%	1,379,824	
14	Motorboating	20%	1,043,582	Highly Popular
16	Golf	18%	952,526	
19	Hiking	13%	683,270	
23	Snowmobiling	11%	541,176	Moderately Popular
25	Running/Jogging	9%	477,948	
35	RV Camping	6%	305,617	
43	X-C Skiing	5%	277,389	
45	Off-Road Mt. Biking	5%	245,882	
47	Horseback Riding	5%	238,539	
51	Snowshoeing	1%	72,941	
52	Sailing	1%	55,294	
61	Windsurfing	0.01%	4,706	Marginally Popular

Source: Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2000-2005, Draft 1.0

Table 10, although not directly applicable to Fond du Lac County, does give some indication to the relative level of participation in outdoor activities in the County. Note that 12 of the 21 uses listed in the Table can be carried out on recreation trails, with the key uses being exercise-walking, bicycling, hiking, snowmobiling, running/jogging, X-C skiing, mountain biking, horseback riding and snowshoeing.

Table 11, is a compilation of results to a question from a public opinion survey prepared and distributed by the County Planning & Parks Department during January 2000. Respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they participated in 25 types of outdoor recreation. Survey responses are tabulated below and ranked by weekly participation (the highlighted column) in types of outdoor recreation. The most frequently mentioned forms of outdoor recreation participated in on a weekly basis include walking/hiking, golfing, bicycling, swimming, fishing, wildlife viewing and motor boating. With the exception of golf, which ranked very high locally, these results mirror statewide data in Table 10 above. These survey results are compiled from 156 opinion surveys completed and returned to the County Planning & Parks Department.

Table 11 Frequency of Participation in Various Outdoor Recreation Activities, 1999

Activity	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly	Never
Walking/Hiking	23	40	21	14	13	33
Golfing	4	27	13	14	17	68
Bicycling	6	26	21	25	19	45
Swimming	5	26	14	22	17	62
Fishing	1	25	24	23	20	48
Wildlife Viewing	23	22	18	21	13	49
Motorboating	2	19	16	11	17	76
ATV Riding	1	10	4	4	10	109
Hunting	2	10	5	19	22	83
Running/Jogging	7	10	4	9	6	104
Snowmobiling	0	10	3	11	9	108
In-Line Skating	1	9	4	7	3	115
Mountain Biking	1	7	7	5	8	113
Jet Skiing	0	6	1	2	5	124
Volleyball	2	6	7	15	21	87
X-C Skiing	0	6	5	5	13	110
Canoing/Kayaking	0	5	4	3	12	114
Softball	0	4	3	9	16	108
RV Camping	0	3	14	5	11	105
Horseback Riding	1	3	1	1	21	112
Picnicing	1	3	25	45	28	40
Tent Camping	0	1	4	17	20	96
Sailing	0	1	1	1	2	134
Snowshoeing	0	1	1	3	8	126
Windsurfing	0	0	0	1	1	136

Source: Fond du Lac County Planning Department, 1999

When county residents were asked about their perceived need for additional land for outdoor recreation purposes, lakefront and riverfront property was most mentioned. Table 12 below shows how each of five given types of property ranked among survey respondents. The appendix provides additional information on Table 12.

Table 12 Perceived Need for Various Types of Park Land, 1999

Type of Property	Score
Lakefront	462
Riverfront	440
Wetland	410
Escarpment	346
Drumlins	302

Source: Fond du Lac County Planning Department, 1999

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the quantity of various outdoor recreation facilities. Table 13 summarizes responses to this question, sorted by adequacy of the quantity of specific facilities.

Table 13 Satisfaction with Quantity of Outdoor Recreation Facilities, 1999

Facility	Adequate	Inadequate
Playgrounds	114	16
Picnic Areas	114	14
Boat Launches	103	23
Public Golf Courses	100	27
Natural Areas	99	29
Swimming Pools	98	33
Bicycle Trails	98	28
Hiking/Walking Trails	98	33
Snowmobile Trails	98	19
X-C Ski Trails	97	25
Natural/Open Spaces	94	29
Public Hunting Grounds	89	30
Beaches	86	45
Horse Trails	85	32

Source: Fond du Lac County Planning Department, 1999

COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The recommendations contained in this section are based on the information contained in the first three sections of this recreation plan, and on recommendations of citizens, elected officials and other agencies. Recommendations are made regarding land acquisition and development. These recommendations will, of course, have to be approved by the County Board individually before they are implemented.

Acquisition

Acquisitions listed in this section are recommended for consideration within the next five to ten years, and are not listed in any particular order or priority.

1. Purchase land for access to the County-owned property along the Sheboygan River near Mt. Calvary. This 280-acre public hunting ground is not easily accessible to the public. An alternative access plan could include a canoe landing and limited parking on CTH CCC at the Sheboygan River Bridge by arrangement with the County Highway Department.
2. Purchase land to enlarge Hobbs Woods. The 60-acre park has become so popular, especially given its location near Fond du Lac that it is over-utilized. The park attracts users because of its natural beauty, quiet forested setting, and Parsons Creek. As use has gotten quite heavy, however, the park has at times become overcrowded, which harms the park physically, and spoils the recreational experience for the user.
3. Purchase additional parkland near Fond du Lac, as well as land on the Niagara Escarpment that includes examples of the unique microenvironments found within the cliff faces along some areas of the Escarpment. The Oakfield Ledge State Natural Area is an excellent example of the Escarpment that includes such unique features. The escarpment is gradually being lost to private development. Given the urban growth being experienced in Fond du Lac, and in the surrounding towns of Empire, Friendship, Fond du Lac and Taycheedah, the need exists in a geographic sense for one additional county park. Existing county facilities in the Fond du Lac area are heavily utilized and in some cases already overcrowded. Sites along the Escarpment that offer examples of the unique features including cliff faces, caves, and similar microclimates should be sought out with an eye toward acquisition.
4. Support municipal efforts throughout the County to provide waterfront parkland, parkways, or trails to improve access to rivers, streams, and lakes for water based outdoor recreation. Past examples include a riverside trail in the Campbellsport Village Park and the wetlands walkway in the Brandon Village Park. The potential exists in other communities, including Ripon and Fond du Lac to acquire and develop waterfront parkland.
5. Expand the existing network of recreation trails in Fond du Lac County. The County is in a unique position to partner with the State and local communities to develop a countywide network of multiple-purpose, year round recreation trails. Current examples include connection of the Wild Goose State Park Trail with the Prairie Trail along the US 151 bypass in Fond du Lac and to the Peebles Trail between Fond du Lac and St. Peter. Fond du Lac

County should continue to make connections to outlying communities like Eden and Campbellsport and beyond into Washington County. Specific trail links that the County should encourage include the following:

- Extension of the Wild Goose State Park Trail from Rolling Meadows Drive over Highway 41 to Pioneer Road and beyond.
- Extension of the Eisenbahn State Park Trail from Eden into the City of Fond du Lac including a connection to the Prairie Trail.
- Extension of the Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail from Rolling Meadows Drive over Highway 41 into the City of Fond du Lac.
- Extension of the Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail through the City of Ripon and to Murray Park in Ripon.
- Completion of the Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail between Ripon and Rosendale.
- The County should work with Dodge County and State/Federal land managers of the Horicon Marsh to plan for the eventual construction of a multiple purpose recreation trail system that fully encircles the Horicon Marsh. Completion of such a trail system around the Marsh will provide an additional attraction for tourists visiting the area as well as an amenity for area residents.

Development by Facility

Calvary Marsh

These 280-acres of County recreation land are located southeast of Mt. Calvary and the land straddles the Sheboygan River. The “big island” is an area on the property of higher ground and contains about a 40-acre stand of hardwood trees. The County should complete a selective timber harvest of these woods as a best management practice to assure a strong succession of hardwood trees including red and sugar maples, red and swamp white oak, basswood, black cherry, elm and green ash. Proceeds from the sale of this timber should be used to complete a boundary survey of the property, place boundary markers and construct a canoe launch on CTH CCC to improve boat access to the river and to Calvary Marsh. A take-out point should also be established within the boundaries of Calvary Marsh so that canoeists avoid trespassing on private property. After completion of the timber harvest, portions of the big island should be replanted with trees to help perpetuate the hardwood stand.

Columbia Park

Columbia Park benefited from a master plan for re-development adopted in 1984. Boating facilities at the park are second to none. Two significant improvements remain to be completed.

An addition to the existing breakwater should be considered in the next five years. An addition was planned with boating improvements made in 1999, but permits could not be secured in a timely manner and the breakwater extension was abandoned. Wave action along the extended harbor wall must be observed over the coming years to determine the need for the breakwater extension.

A fish cleaning station with a grinder connected to the sanitary sewer should be constructed in the next five years. Fishing is a big activity at the park for visiting fisherman and for campers. Disposal of fish waste during the summer months is an ongoing problem at the park.

Waupun Park

It is recommended that the public bathrooms at the campground be renovated in the next five years. At that time, ADA accessibility issues must be addressed. The County and City should share the cost of extending a walking and cycling path from the neighboring city to the park along C.T.H. MMM. City residents use this route for daily walks to and through the park. A path would be a useful addition, better connecting the park to the city and many of the users of Waupun Park.

Finally, the city and county must work together to extend sanitary sewer from Waupun into the park. Septic systems in the park are at their limits and the caretaker house is connected to two septic systems that are alternated as system problems occur and are repaired. The privately owned golf course west of the park would also benefit with the availability of sanitary sewer. Recent residential development adjacent to the park greatly reduces the cost of extending sewer into the park.

Riggs County Park

Riggs County Park is the most recent addition to the county park system. A master plan adopted by the County Board in 1999 directs development of the park for the 2000-2005 period. Major development items include wetland restoration, native prairie restoration, multiple use trails, picnic areas, a pavilion, sledding hill, bathhouse and swimming pond. The park is within the DNR Glacial Habitat Restoration Area, making it a candidate for DNR financial assistance to recreate prairie and wetland habitat in the park.

Hobbs Woods Natural Area

If additional land is purchased for the expansion of Hobbs Woods, new walking trails must be designed and built. Trails worn in along Parson's Creek must be abandoned and the stream banks restored. Parking must continue to be limited to avoid overcrowding in the park. If land along Parsons Creek is acquired, there may be opportunities to make further stream and water quality improvements that benefit trout stocked in the stream.

If feasible, complete a selective timber harvest of the woods to assure sustainability of the hardwood forest within the park.

Roosevelt Park

State Highway 151 is scheduled for improvements in the next five years. This opportunity should be taken to reconstruct the park parking lot and construct a traffic island between the road and the parking lot. Vegetative screening should replace the beam guard currently used to separate road traffic from the parking lot.

Wolf Lake

In the next five years, build a new toilet building to replace the 1970's vintage building at the park. The existing building is not ADA compliant and the building is too small to make compliance modifications feasible. Complete the dredging of the channel in front of the public boat launch.

Shaginappi Natural Area Park

This natural area park is scheduled for minimal improvements. Pit toilets in the park must be renovated or replaced and eventually, running water and flush toilets must be provided to comply with town sanitary district requirements. Connect the Lodge to the sanitary sewer system.

A natural history museum operated out of the lodge with a volunteer, non-profit organization should be explored. The park's location on Lake Winnebago and the rich archeological sites in the park make a museum a natural addition to the park.

At the last public hearing on the park plan in 2000, a suggestion was made to construct a boat pier on the Shaginappi side of Calumet Harbor to provide boater access into the park. The County should research the feasibility of a pier to provide boaters better access to the park. Seek funding and construct a pier if the project is found to be feasible.

Complete a selective timber harvest of the pine plantations found on the north and south ends of the park.

Wild Goose State Park Trail

The last developments on the trail should be construction of a trailhead parking area on State Highway 49 adjacent to the Horicon Marsh and a small parking area in the Village of Oakfield. The Highway 49 parking area should include picnic tables and a well for drinking water and a direct connection to the trail. The County should partner with the City of Fond du Lac, WisDOT and the WDNR to acquire upon abandonment the Canadian National Railroad spur from Rolling Meadows Drive extending north over Highway 41 to Pioneer Road and further into the City, if available, to extend the Wild Goose Trail. The County should also support the extension of the trail along Pioneer Road and Martin Road to provide a connection to the Prairie Trail.

Continue working on the elimination of invasive species, especially within the Oakfield Prairie State Natural Area portion of the trail.

Mascoutin Valley State Park Trail

The Mascoutin Valley Trail is another multiple-purpose recreation trail that is a cooperative effort between Fond du Lac County, neighboring counties and the DNR. The trail is built on an abandoned railroad right-of-way and extends from Berlin to Fond du Lac by way of Ripon, Rosendale and Eldorado. Development of the trail is complete between Ripon and Berlin. The Ripon to Rosendale section must still be purchased and developed. The trail is owned by the State between Rosendale and Fond du Lac.

Construction of a trail parking lot at State Highway 26 in Rosendale should be completed in the next 5 years. A small parcel of land adjacent to the trail on the east side of Rosendale would make a good trailside park.

Continue working on the elimination of invasive species, especially within the Eldorado Marsh portion of the trail.

Peebles Trail

The pedestrian bridge over Taycheedah Creek must be replaced in the next five years to provide a full, 10-foot trail surface over the creek. The County should monitor trail traffic and wear with an eye toward surfacing the balance of the trail with asphalt pavement.

Continue working on the elimination of invasive species within the trail right of way.

Eisenbahn State Park Trail

The Fox Valley Western Railroad line between Eden and West Bend is owned by the State of Wisconsin. This 25-mile long corridor passes through the Kettle Moraine terrain of southeastern Fond du Lac and Washington Counties. In Eden, the corridor is straddled by land recently purchased by the Village and Town of Eden. A recent purchase by the WDNR now extends State ownership of the corridor north to Lime Road, approximately 1 mile north of Main Street in Eden.

With trail surfacing and bridge construction set for completion in 2006, the County must begin planning for the eventual extension of the trail to Fond du Lac. Connections with the Prairie Trail must be made and thought should be given to locations for trailhead parking and connections to streets in Fond du Lac.

Identify areas infested with invasive species and work toward elimination of invasive species.

Northwoods Park

Expand the walking trail system within the park. Complete a timber evaluation and conduct a timber harvest designed to sustain the hardwoods forest. Identify and eliminate invasive species of plants within the park.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This capital improvement plan is an exercise to plan and schedule capital improvements for county parks and trails over the next five-year period. It is important to note that actual annual expenditures and priorities will, of course, be set during the annual budget process, utilizing the normal interactive process between County Board Committees, the County Executive, the County Board as a whole and county staff. It is hoped that this capital improvement plan will serve as a useful tool in the decision-making process during each of the next five county budgets.

All of the projects listed in this CIP are grant eligible under a number of State and Federal outdoor recreation grant programs. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Program and the Gaylord-Nelson Stewardship Program are both reliable sources for land acquisition grants and all of the land acquisition projects listed in this CIP qualify and would be competitive in these grant programs. Grants under these programs are typically 50/50 matching grants. In addition to the grant programs mentioned above, there are a number of other State and Federal grant programs administered by the WDNR, WisDOT and the U.S. Department of the Interior that offer funding, from 50/50 to as much as 100/0 grant/local funds for development projects. Development projects listed in this CIP all fall within one or more of the various grants eligibility requirements from these State and Federal agencies.

Parks Capital Improvements Plan 2006-2010

	Project Cost	Potential Grant Funding	County Levy	Donations /Other	
2006 County Park Projects					
Niagara Escarpment land acquisition	\$550,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$150,000	
Eisenbahn Trail bridge construction	\$69,000	\$69,000	\$0	\$0	
Eisenbahn Trail surfacing	\$110,000	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$0	
Peebles Trail Surfacing	\$95,800	\$95,800	\$0	\$0	
Riggs County Park Development	\$100,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	
Year Total	\$924,800	\$424,800	\$350,000	\$150,000	\$924,800
2007 County Park Projects					
Riggs County Park Development	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	
Waupun Park campground bathroom reconstruction	\$250,000	\$125,000	\$125,000	\$0	
Niagara Escarpment land acquisition	\$400,000	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	
Wild Goose Trail Hwy 41 bridge & trail extension	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$0	\$0	
Waupun Park pool reconditioning	\$150,000	\$0	\$150,000	\$0	
Columbia Park tower repainting	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000	\$0	
Year Total	\$1,435,000	\$825,000	\$510,000	\$100,000	\$1,435,000
2008 County Park Projects					
Riggs County Park swimming pond	\$1,500,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$0	
Wolf Lake bathroom reconstruction	\$45,000	\$22,500	\$22,500	\$0	
Roosevelt Park parking lot reconstruction	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	
Calvary Marsh canoe landing & parking construction	\$5,000	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$0	
Peebles Trail bridge construction	\$45,000	\$22,500	\$22,500	\$0	
Peebles Trail asphalt surfacing	\$90,000	\$45,000	\$45,000	\$0	
Year Total	\$1,735,000	\$869,000	\$866,000	\$0	\$1,735,000
2009 County Park Projects					
Shaganappi Park boat pier construction	\$15,000	\$12,000	\$3,000	\$0	
Shaganappi Park sewer connection	\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	
Columbia Park breakwater construction	\$165,000	\$132,000	\$33,000	\$0	
Year Total	\$205,000	\$144,000	\$61,000	\$0	\$205,000
2010 County Park Projects					
Columbia Park fish cleaning station	\$65,000	\$52,000	\$13,000	\$0	
Mascoutin Valley Trail parking lot construction	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	
Wild Goose Trail parking lot construction	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	
Year Total	\$100,000	\$87,000	\$13,000	\$0	\$100,000
Five Year Total	\$4,399,800	\$2,349,800	\$1,800,000	\$250,000	\$4,399,800
% of Five Year Total		53%	41%	6%	

APPENDIX 1

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS, FOND DU LAC COUNTY, 1970-2020

Unit of Government	2000 Census	Change	2005 RPC	Change	2010 RPC	Change	2015 RPC	Change	2020 RPC
C. Fond du Lac	42,203	2.54%	43,273	3.11%	44,619	2.91%	45,918	2.81%	47,210
C. Ripon	6,828	12.42%	7,676	2.10%	7,837	1.90%	7,986	1.79%	8,129
C. Waupun (pt.)	3,282	2.35%	3,359	3.75%	3,485	3.53%	3,608	3.44%	3,732
V. Brandon	912	0.77%	919	1.31%	931	1.07%	941	0.85%	949
V. Campbellsport	1,913	2.14%	1,954	2.61%	2,005	2.34%	2,052	2.29%	2,099
V. Eden	687	9.02%	749	9.48%	820	8.90%	893	8.40%	968
V. Fairwater	350	3.14%	361	3.32%	373	3.49%	386	3.11%	398
V. Mt. Calvary	956	0.31%	959	1.56%	974	1.33%	987	1.22%	999
V. N. Fond du Lac	4,557	4.89%	4,780	3.79%	4,961	3.57%	5,138	3.46%	5,316
V. Oakfield	1,012	1.58%	1,028	1.07%	1,039	0.87%	1,048	0.76%	1,056
V. Rosendale	923	6.50%	983	5.70%	1,039	5.39%	1,095	5.30%	1,153
V. St. Cloud	497	1.21%	503	0.00%	503	-0.20%	502	-0.40%	500
T. Alto	1,103	0.82%	1,112	-0.09%	1,111	-0.45%	1,106	-0.63%	1,099
T. Ashford	1,773	4.79%	1,858	3.82%	1,929	3.63%	1,999	3.50%	2,069
T. Auburn	2,075	6.84%	2,217	5.14%	2,331	4.89%	2,445	4.74%	2,561
T. Byron	1,550	3.61%	1,606	1.49%	1,630	1.29%	1,651	1.15%	1,670
T. Calumet	1,514	1.32%	1,534	0.85%	1,547	0.65%	1,557	0.51%	1,565
T. Eden	979	0.51%	984	-0.91%	975	-1.44%	961	-1.56%	946
T. Eldorado	1,447	3.46%	1,497	1.87%	1,525	1.64%	1,550	1.48%	1,573
T. Empire	2,620	5.53%	2,765	3.73%	2,868	3.49%	2,968	3.40%	3,069
T. Fond du Lac	2,027	15.29%	2,337	5.13%	2,457	4.92%	2,578	4.73%	2,700
T. Forest	1,108	3.34%	1,145	1.92%	1,167	1.71%	1,187	1.52%	1,205
T. Friendship	2,406	4.20%	2,507	3.07%	2,584	2.86%	2,658	2.78%	2,732
T. Lamartine	1,616	3.84%	1,678	1.55%	1,704	1.35%	1,727	1.22%	1,748
T. Marshfield	1,118	0.98%	1,129	0.00%	1,129	-0.18%	1,127	-0.44%	1,122
T. Metomen	709	2.54%	727	0.96%	734	0.82%	740	0.68%	745
T. Oakfield	767	0.91%	774	-0.65%	769	-0.91%	762	-1.05%	754
T. Osceola	1,802	3.77%	1,870	3.69%	1,939	3.51%	2,007	3.44%	2,076
T. Ripon	2,001	-29.29%	1,415	0.92%	1,428	0.77%	1,439	0.63%	1,448
T. Rosendale	783	1.66%	796	1.13%	805	0.99%	813	0.98%	821
T. Springvale	727	1.10%	735	-0.14%	734	-0.54%	730	-0.68%	725
T. Taycheedah	3,666	5.02%	3,850	3.58%	3,988	3.36%	4,122	3.28%	4,257
T. Waupun	1,385	2.96%	1,426	1.26%	1,444	1.04%	1,459	0.96%	1,473
Fond du Lac Co.	97,296	3.30%	100,506	2.86%	103,384	2.67%	106,140	2.57%	108,867

Source: East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, October 2004. Wi. Dept. of Admin., December 2005.

APPENDIX 2

Population by Age Group, 1940-2000, Fond du Lac County

Year	Under 18	18-64	65+	Totals
1940	18,167	38,298	5,888	62,353
1950	20,703	39,813	7,313	67,829
1960	27,964	38,356	8,765	75,085
1970	30,887	44,001	9,679	84,567
1980	21,472	56,461	11,010	88,943
1990	24,569	52,856	12,658	90,083
2000	24,489	58,865	13,942	97,296

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1940-2000